

NEWS FROM THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW ROCHELLE JULY 2018

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



2017-2018 YEAR END REPORT

I can report it's been a VERY busy year! Reading our newsletter regularly has hopefully given you a sense of our focus, our activity and our concerns.

Voter Service continued as the heart of what we do and who we are. We headed to the Farmer's market in the weeks following last year's Annual Meeting to register voters and never stopped, expanding venues wherever possible. In early September, we were at Iona's Involvement Fair held as part of student orientation, and back again to

participate in Constitution Day to register and educate young voters. We have been at CNR and Monroe College regularly. We spread out all over town and had tables at supermarkets and the train station for National Voter Registration Day.

With growing focus on even younger voters we registered hundreds of students at The Ursuline School, and Iona Prep and provided them with educational materials. We supported NRHS and the Alternative School in making sure their students were registered as well. As our program year draws to a close, our tallies show we've added 500 new voters to the rolls!

Within this program year we will have held or co-sponsored FOUR Candidates Forums for elected officials at all levels of government: at the local level for School and Library Boards; at the County level for two Legislative seats; a State Senate seat; and at the Federal level, a primary for an Assembly seat! As many of you know firsthand, and most can imagine, it has taken considerable effort from a lot of determined people. All these efforts are under the direction of Joan Alexander, and I want to thank and congratulate her and her team of dedicated volunteers on a most successful year.

And speaking of successful years, two other of our Programs have experienced that several times over. Our Cable show, *City People and issues* has been on fire! During the year, Ina Aronow, Program producer, interviewed Damon Maher, newly elected County Legislator, George Latimer, County Executive, City Manager Chuck Strome, Mayor Noam Bramson, Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins, School Superintendent Brian Osborne, as well as author, Amy Bass. Ina has been joined in the interviewer spot by Tamar Tait who has presented conversations with leaders of several community services organizations including NR Senior Services Director Phillis Maucieri.

Coffee and Conversation likewise was successful in scheduling highly relevant presenters: Luiz Aragon, Commissioner of Development, Mayor Noam Bramson, Jerry Birmingham, from the company developing Beckwith Pointe, and Barbara Davis, City Historian! Many thanks to Susan Fleming for her inspired leadership in making this a vibrant opportunity for dialog.

An apt segue to inspired leadership: I hope you all have enjoyed the evolution of our Newsletter, not only

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visually and aesthetically, but substantially as well. The transformation has created a must-read edition bringing you info on issues, advocacy, actions taken, and community events to support and enjoy. Huge kudos to Leslie Mignault for her superb editorship!

This year, in celebration of 100 years of women suffrage in NY, our board on your behalf voted to send two students (rather than the usual one) to LWVNY's *Student in Albany* program. Amy Weiser and Cindy Kahn coordinated the selection of those students with the faculty at NRHS. Reports of the students' amazing experiences appear elsewhere in the Newsletter. Thank you to Cindy and Amy for guiding this program so smoothly!

Many others on our board provide essential support, often behind the scenes. They provide the backbone of our more visible work. Boundless thanks to our Recording Sec. Leona Newman, Corresponding Sec. Marilyn Brown, Co-chair for Membership Pearl Quarles, Co-editor Louise Kuklis, Webmaster John Hessel, Government Issues Chair, Peter Korn, our "go-to guy" for all things government and politics!

We continued our celebration and support of New Rochelle's Council-Mayor form of government in facilitating the International Association of City Managers' commendation of the city on its 85th anniversary of this effective form of government. Speaking at the City Council meeting where it was presented, I was joined at the podium by our League members, Joan Siverstein, President of the New Rochelle Charter League, and NR City Historian, Barbara Davis.

League members welcomed new citizens during swearing-in proceedings at the County Courthouse. At least twice a year, our league takes its turn, rotating with other leagues throughout the county as representatives at Naturalization Court. We distributed the pamphlet, *Welcome New Citizens!* and congratulated 248 newly-naturalized Westchesterites!

One additional, lesser known service that we performed this year was to conduct the NR Municipal Housing Authority election. Every two years, the residents of the MHA elect two people to serve as their representatives on its Advisory Council. The League has been asked to monitor this bi-annual election regularly for many years. This year's election was organized by Ina Aronow in conjunction with Pearl Quarles, and staffed by many league members including Pat Carter who also helped with the afterhours tally. We are pleased to have been part of "making democracy work" for our community.

The details above outline just the highlights of our year. There is more that we can accomplish with more "hands on deck." I invite you to get involved, actively joining in for an hour or two, or on an ongoing basis. Become a member or renew your membership today: support advocacy efforts locally, throughout New York State, and the nation to promote informed and active citizen participation in government. **--MONICA GREY**

Want to Register Voters at the New York State Fair?

The League of Women Voters of NYS has once again secured an air conditioned exhibit space to register voters and provide voting information! The State Fair is held in Syracuse from August 27th - September 3rd and is open every day from10:00 am to 10:00 pm. We will provide entrance passes and parking passes for the days that you're willing to work.

Please email Jennifer (Jennifer@lwvny.org) with the day/time that you're available to work.

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO THE LEAGUE! Join or Renew on line at <u>www.lwvnewro.org</u>

ANNUAL LWVNR MEETING AT SAGE CAFE



The LWVNR annual meeting was done a little differently this year with a

Saturday brunch at the new SAGE café across from Iona College. Rather than listening to an invited speaker, as in past years, the meeting was designed to be a casual Meet and Greet with members, friends and elected officials; about 40 people in all.

A short business meeting was held at the start, with members approving the slate of

officers, the budget, and the coming year's program and action agenda. State Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins swore in re-elected officers Ina Aronow, Leslie Mignault, Leona Newman and Pearl Quarles, who will each serve for the next two





years. Senator Stewart-Cousins urged the attendees to "vote as if democracy depended on it."



Sophie Goldman, one of two New Rochelle High School juniors sponsored by our League to participate in LWVNYS's three day *Students in Albany* program, thanked the League for choosing her and gave a glowing report of the experience.



New County Legislators Damon Maher and Terry Clements also attended and were engaged in lively

conversation with other participants on a broad range of topics. New Rochelle's additional County Legislator,

Catherine Parker, who was out of town setting up her new college freshman, sent her good wishes to all.

--Ina Aronow





LOCAL LEAGUES SPONSOR DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY FORUM

Congressman Eliot Engel of the New York State 16th Congressional District faced Primary challengers Joyce N. Briscoe, Derickson K. Lawrence and Jonathan Lewis at a League of Women Voters Forum on Sunday, June 24th at Reisinger Auditorium on the Sarah Lawrence College campus. The Forum was co-sponsored by LWV of New Rochelle, LWV of the Rivertowns, LWV of Scarsdale, and LWV of Larchmont/Mamaroneck.

Questions submitted by the League of Women Voters and by members of the audience covered a variety of topics, from a single payer health system, environmental priorities and foreign policy, to protection of the Social Security system, immigration, women's

rights and the congressional ethics process.

The four candidates each gave an opening statement. Candidates were then asked to respond individually to four questions prepared by the Leagues. Each candidate then responded to six additional questions from the audience. These questions had been submitted in advance on index cards, which were read by the moderator. Finally, each



(Left to right) Joyce Briscoe, Eliot Engel, Derickson Lawrence, Jonathan Lewis, and Moderator Paul Schwarz

candidate was given the opportunity to deliver a closing statement.

--Adapted from Maggie Klein, Pelham Weekly, 6/25/2018

To watch this debate on video, click this LINK.

Incumbent Rep. Eliot Engel Re-Elected to the 16th Congressional District

Although the results have not been certified, the New York Times reported on Thursday that Representative Engel has received 73.7 percent of the vote. With 99% of districts reporting, challenger Jonathan Lewis had received 16.3 percent of the vote, Joyce N. Briscoe had received 5.8 percent of the vote, and Derickson K. Lawrence had received 4.3 percent of the vote.

Engel was first elected to Congress in 1988. His district includes the northern Bronx and Yonkers, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Mamaroneck, Larchmont, Scarsdale, Eastchester, Bronxville, Tuckahoe, Pelham, Pelham Manor, Rye, Rye City, and parts of Ardsley, Hastings-on-Hudson, and Edgemont. --adapted from Patch 6/26/2018 and the New York Times, 6/28/2018

VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Volunteers are needed to help register voters on Friday, July 6th at the Library Book Sale and on Saturday, July 7th at the Farmers Market at Library Green. No previous experience is needed. We will provide orientation and "on the job" training and support!

For more information, contact Joan at <u>royjoanalex@yahoo.com</u> or at 914-715-3916.



VOLUNTEER BILL MULLEN AT THE FARMER'S MARKET



IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO REGISTER!

Deadlines to register in person or on line, or to apply for an absentee ballot for the upcoming November 6th general election, can be found at :

https://on.ny.gov/2jeVxK2

LEARN ABOUT VOTING IN NEW YORK STATE

Can I register to vote online? Is there a deadline before which I have to register to vote, in order to vote in the next election? What if I have a past felony conviction? Can I still register and vote? Get answers to these and other commonly asked questions about registering to vote, voting, and elections in your state.



Voting in New York

STUDENTS IN ALBANY: ONE PARTICIPANT'S ACCOUNT

I wish I could personally thank everyone associated with the League of Women Voters of New Rochelle for giving me the opportunity to represent my school, my city, and my county at the Students Inside Albany conference this past May. First and foremost, thank you to Cindy Kahn, who was beyond helpful in coordinating travel plans for (fellow participant) Sophie Goldman and for me.

I consider myself to be generally aware politically, so I was stunned by my lack of familiarity with New York state government. SIA opened my eyes to the inner workings of state legislature, and I was able to learn so much about how our legislators respond to the issues facing our society. Shadowing Assemblywoman Amy Paulin for just an hour was enough to show me how incredibly chaotic her job is; constantly running between meetings and the Assembly floor to vote on bills. And yet, not only did she take the time to talk to us, but also to have a conversation with a representative from the Boys and Girls Club of New Rochelle, demonstrating her commitment to our district and our needs.

We toured the Court of Appeals and the Capitol building, and also jumped right into lawmaking ourselves by holding a mock session on the Assembly floor. The highlight of the conference for me was directly witnessing the joint session to nominate Attorney General Barbara Underwood. Being a young woman, I was honored to watch history being made as a woman was appointed to the position for the first time.

My biggest takeaway from this experience was how inspiring the efforts of League members and other lobbyists are to fight for causes they believe in. We heard from lobbyists for environmental issues and education who shared a deep passion for what they do. I am confident, having met so many other dedicated students, that my generation will carry this forward. Thank you again for this invaluable learning experience!

--Eliza Crocker, NRHS 2019

Parkland Survivors Launch Tour To Register Young Voters And Get Them Out In November

Three months ago the students from South Florida established themselves as a potent force in the gun debate with the March For Our Lives rally. This summer they're hitting the road with a new mission: turn the wave of young activism they helped spark into an energized voting bloc for the November mid-term elections.

It's a voter mobilization effort aimed at getting young people registered and keeping them energized through the summer. A nationwide tour will make 50-plus stops in more than 20 states, including Iowa, Texas, South Carolina and Connecticut. The will also be a Florida tour stopping in all 27 of the state's Congressional districts.



--NPR, 6/16/2018 Read the rest at PARKLAND

New Rochelle Voters Approve Second School Budget

After rejecting a \$272.8 million schools budget, voters came back on June 19th to approve a revised \$270,381,160 spending plan that will have a limited impact for taxpayers by a vote of 1,757 to 1,004.

The cap on the increase in the tax levy – the amount of money to be raised by property taxes – was 2.231 percent. The budget kept the increase to that level by cutting \$3.4 million from the tax levy that was included in the budget that voters rejected in May. The tax levy in the now-approved budget is \$209,002,162. That is an increase of \$4,560,520 over the levy of \$204,441,642 in the 2017-2018 budget.

Changes from the initial budget include the elimination of the planned addition of three psychologists and three social workers. The Board also eliminated the inclusion of several contingent positions placed in the budget for unexpected needs.

"This budget will serve the district well," New Rochelle Schools Superintendent Brian Osborne said in a statement. "By allocating resources responsibly, the budget preserves our programs, provides for necessary additions and also protects the fiscal health that we have worked so hard to improve in recent years."

"It has been an intense year for New Rochelle parents, children, and educators — beginning, of course, with the heartbreaking loss of a student in January, and then shaped by sometimes contentious debates about school programming, personnel, financing, and security," New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson stated. "But even as we continue wrestling with important questions, let's not lose sight of something fundamental: New Rochelle's public schools are an extraordinary asset, providing outstanding educational opportunities and experiences to youngsters of every interest, circumstance, and tradition."

-- New Rochelle Daily Voice, 6/20/2018

NEW ROCHELLE TO GET PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FUNDS FROM STATE

Communities around the Hudson Valley will be receiving more than \$8 million from the state that has been allotted for pedestrian safety projects, including \$2.54 million to the city of New Rochelle for pedestrian signal improvements.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Monday a \$62 million investment as part of the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, a multi-agency initiative to utilize engineering, education and enforcement campaigns to enhance pedestrian safety across upstate New York and on Long Island.

"Pedestrian safety impacts residents of all ages and in all communities, and it is critical that we make our roads safer for everyone," Cuomo said. "By making significant investments in our roads, educating the public and cracking down on lawbreakers, New York is supporting eco-friendly transportation in our downtowns while enhancing pedestrian safety in all corners of the state."

--PATCH, 6/11/2018

League of Women Voters of New York State

LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAP-UP

The legislative session has ended and, as expected, the Legislature failed to pass any of the progressive reforms we had advocated for. We weren't the only group scorned by the Assembly and Senate; very few issues were able to be resolved before the two-houses gaveled out late Wednesday night.

Election law reforms, single payer health care, the Reproductive Health Act, the Contraceptive Coverage Act, and closure of the LLC loophole all passed in the Assembly but were not taken up by the Senate. Our two priority anti-corruption bills, the Database of Deals and Procurement Integrity Act, were passed by the Senate but not the Assembly.

Typically, towards the end of session, the "three men in a room" (the Governor, Senate Leader, and Assembly Speaker) get together and make a deal on what issues they are willing to trade in order to pass a large package of reforms known as "the big ugly." This year, there was no package of reforms. Instead of meeting with the house leaders, the Governor appeared on several national news stations to chastise the federal government over family separation (an issue our National League has been working on ending).

The legislature did manage to pass an opioid take back program, implementation of a Prosecutorial accountability office, a mandate for feminine hygiene products to be available for all female inmates, and tougher laws on ticket scalpers.

It was a difficult year for all advocates. Between the Senate stalemate and the fear of looming state primaries for nearly all sitting members, it seemed the Legislature was afraid to vote on any meaningful reforms that could hurt their reelection bid.

Now that the session has ended, we are turning our focus to the upcoming primary and general elections. We will continue our election education work into the summer and fall. We hope that you have enjoyed these weekly session updates! Over the course of the session, we were able to hold several member-wide calls on issues and advocacy that could be taken by members. We also kept members informed using our Facebook and Twitter pages to share what was happening in real time at the Capitol.

--LWVNYS WEEKLY SESSION UPDATE, 6/22/18

Jennifer Wilson, Legislative Director of the League of Women Voters of New York State, was interviewed on 6/21/2018 by the Sanctuary for Independent Media on the League's priorities and what the NYS Legislature did and did not accomplish during the 2018 Session. To hear the interview, push here:



VOTING RIGHTS AROUND THE NATION

Judge Tosses Kansas' Proof-Of-Citizenship Voter Law

Kansas cannot require people to prove their U.S. citizenship before they can vote, a federal judge says, ruling that the state's election law is unconstitutional. The judge sharply criticized Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, who has based much of his political career on worries about voter fraud.

Chief District Judge Julie A. Robinson sanctioned Kobach — who led President Trump's voter fraud commission — by ordering him to take a legal class on the rules of evidence or procedure. Kobach represented his office and was the lead attorney in the case. The judge said Kobach failed to show there had been a "substantial number" of people who managed to register to vote in Kansas without being U.S. citizens.

--BILL CHAPPELL FOR NPR, 6/19/2018

Read the rest of this article at KANSAS

SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS MOST TEXAS ELECTION DISTRICTS OVER CHARGES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

A sharply divided Supreme Court ruled on June 25th that Texas did not draw most congressional and state legislative election districts based on racial demographics.

The 5-4 ruling by the court's conservative justices said only one state House district was designed by using race impermissibly. It upheld the Republican-controlled state legislature's maps, based largely on a federal court's 2013 requirement, for all others.

--USA TODAY, 6/25/18

Read the rest of this article at TEXAS

In a Major Voting Rights Case, the Supreme Court Upheld Ohio's Efforts to Purge Voting rolls of People it Suspects have Moved

The Supreme Court on Monday upheld Ohio's aggressive efforts to purge its voting rolls, siding with Republicans in the latest partisan battle over how far states can go in imposing restrictions on voting.

<u>The court ruled</u> that states may kick people off the rolls if they skip a few elections and fail to respond to a notice from election officials. The vote was 5 to 4, with the more conservative justices in the majority.

On one level, the decision sought to make sense of tangled statutory language. But it was also a vivid reminder that measures placing obstacles between people seeking to vote and their ability to cast ballots — including cutbacks on early voting, elimination of same-day registration and tough voter ID laws — present dueling visions of democracy.

--Adam Liptak, The New York Times, 6/11/2018

Read the rest of this article at OHIO

Louise Kuklis 1950-2018

Louise Kuklis joined the LWVNR Board after her retirement from Edgemont Jr/Sr High School where, as a passionate and creative educator, she had been selected by her peers as a "Teacher of the Year." She directed her enthusiasm for civics and intellectual curiosity to revitalizing our newsletter and producing voter guides for our school board elections. Her analyses of political and governmental rhetoric were always incisive, delivered with wit and civility.

Louise was also a talented painter. She had always loved to paint and draw, but rediscovered her passion after she took a watercolor class organized by *Gilda's Club*. Louise's thank-you notes to friends were both thoughtfully written and beautifully hand-painted but, with typical modesty, often unsigned by the artist.

Far above all else, Louise was kind. Her boundless generosity spilled over into everything she did, and onto everyone she knew. Those of us who were fortunate to be the recipients of her kindness and her friendship will miss her deeply.



Louise with granddaughter Zoe

News from the League of Women Voters of New Rochelle is published by the Executive Board of the LWV-NR. We are Joan Alexander, Ina Aronow, Marilyn Brown, Susan Fleming, Monica Grey, Sydelle Herzberg, John Hessel, Peter Korn, Louise Kuklis, Leslie Mignault, and Pearl Quarles. Contact us at LWVNewRochelle@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD UPCOMING EVENTS



Spark the Sound July 4th Fireworks

This July 4th, cap off your holiday evening with a viewing of the grand fireworks display at the New Rochelle



waterfront. Produced and sponsored by the famous Grucci family, the City of New Rochelle's annual "Spark the Sound" extravaganza starts at 9:30 pm, rain or shine. Optimum viewing locations are Hudson Park, Five Islands Park, and waterfront restaurants.







JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW ROCHELLE

The League depends on the work and financial support of all of its to carry out its programs. Membership is open to women and men of voting age. Joining our local league confers membership in the State and National Leagues, enables you to receive publications from all three levels with access to members-only online resources, and provides the opportunity to be involved in local, state and national issues.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME	
ADDRESS	
CITY, STATE, ZIP	
TELEPHONE	EMAIL
NEW MEMBERSHIP	RENEWAL
INDIVIDUAL \$60/YEAR I	HOUSEHOLD* \$85/YEAR
* ADDITIONAL HOUSEHOLD MEMBER NAME	
EMAIL	
PLEASE MAKE YOUR MEMBERSHIP CHECK PAYABLE TO LWV NR I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE LEAGUE WITH A TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION MADE PAYABLE TO LWV EDUCATION FOUNDATION	
\$100\$50	_ OTHER
RETURN THIS APPLICATION WITH YOUR CHECK TO The League of Women Voters of New Rochelle 45 Long Vue New Rochelle, NY 10804 or Join and/or Donate via PAYPAL on our website: www.lwvnewro.org	